Miscellaneous Invoice Data Quality Best Practices 

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1 Background

The SIS Miscellaneous Invoice Data Quality Initiative aims to improve the exchanged invoices quality through SIS and support the increasing adoption of automated reconciliation and payment processes by SIS participants across the industry.

Poor data quality increases manual intervention, reconciliation efforts, and payment delays, resulting in higher operational costs and a less efficient invoicing experience. When invoice data is incomplete, inaccurate, or inconsistent, automated matching and validation processes may fail, requiring manual review and intervention to resolve discrepancies. This not only increases operational costs but also causes additional pressure on finance and accounting teams.

While by improving invoice data quality, SIS participants can improve automation, reduce manual processing efforts, accelerate reconciliation cycles, and strengthen operational efficiency. In addition, higher-quality invoice data reduces effort required to manage protests and disputes across both ICH and ACH clearing houses.

Ultimately, enhanced data quality contributes to lower processing costs, improved payment timeliness, and a more seamless invoicing experience for both billing and billed entities.

An **Invoice Data Quality Task Force**, comprising representatives from **SIS Steering Group** and the **IATA SIS Team**, has been tracking and analyzing miscellaneous invoice rejections and disputes across the industry over the last several years. The formula below refers to calculation of rates of rejections and disputes raised against original MISC invoices:

$$\textbf{Rejections + Disputes Ratio} = \frac{\text{Total Number of incoming (Rejections + Disputes) of past 12 month}}{\text{Total Number of sent invoices of past 12 month}}$$

Through detailed analysis of rejection and dispute trends, the group has worked to identify the key data quality issues impacting invoice processing and automated reconciliation.

2 Purpose of this document

This document contains a list of best practices, considerations and recommendations to help airlines ensure high-quality MISC invoices and reduce unnecessary rejections and disputes.

Please note that this remains a “living” document and will be updated as and when needed.

3 Common issues in MISC Data Quality

- **Incorrect Data**; *Example:* Incorrect Charge Category, Charge Code or Charge Code Type**,** incorrect Service / Value dates.

- **Inadequate Data**; *Example:* Missing operational references, invoice with only one Line-Item, incomplete description at Line-Item or Line-Item Detail level.

- **Unclear Data**; *Example:* Line-Item descriptions are incomplete; however, the full invoice details are included in the supporting documents.

- **Substitution value**; *Example:* Using dummy or substitution value for invoice Mandatory fields.

- **Supporting Document Mismatch;** *Example:* Mismatch between commercial agreement and invoice data, mismatch of line-Items or line-Item Details between SIS invoice and Supporting Document.

4 How to comply with SIS MISC standards to improve accuracy?

1. **SIS Participation Guide on MISC Billing Category**

   Document **'(MISC-UATP) SIS-P4-Materials-SIS-Participation-Guide (pdf)'** as part of **MISC/UATP ISPG Package** is the primary reference guide for MISC Billing in SIS. It provides an overview of industry Charge Categories and Charge Codes, billing processes, business rules, settlement procedures, and supporting documentation requirements, helping participants understand and implement Miscellaneous Billing within SIS.

2. **IS-XML Invoice Standard with detailed specifications**

   Document **'MISC/UATP IS-XML Invoice Standard'** contains information on:

   - **'MISC-IS XML Standard'** tab contains detailed specifications for
     - **Invoice structure and hierarchy**: Invoice Header, Line-Item, Line-Item Detail, Invoice Summary, Invoice Transmission.
     - **Field definitions:** Field names, Data types, Length restrictions, Format requirements, Validation rules.
   - **'M&U Charge Category-ChargeCode'** tab lists all Charge Categories and their associated Charge Codes.
   - **'Charge Code Type List'** tab lists the Charge Code Types associated with each Charge Category and Charge Code.
   - **'UOM Code List'** tab lists all defined Units of Measure (UOM).

- **'M&U Mandatory-Recommended flds'** tab identifies the mandatory and recommended fields applicable to specific combinations of Charge Category and Charge Code.

In addition, the webinar '**SIS Miscellaneous Invoice Data Quality**' available on SIS website/Webinars provides further guidance on complying with SIS requirements and includes best practices and common mistakes as sample use cases.

5 What Can SIS Billing Members Do?

- Maintain consistent use of industry reference data across operational and financial systems.
- Align operational processes with invoice data requirements to ensure invoicing data is captured accurately at the source.
- Implement data validation controls and review procedures before invoice submission in SIS.
- Leverage automation and system integrations to reduce manual data entry and improve data consistency.
- Monitor and analyze incoming invoice rejection and dispute to identify root causes to implement corrective actions and drive continuous improvement, reducing recurring errors over time.
- Conduct regular cross-functional meetings between Finance, Commercial and Operations teams to review recurring invoice rejections, disputes, and data quality issues.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to communicate and resolve data quality issues between two parties and drive process improvement to prevent rejections.
- Promote data quality awareness and SIS best practices internally through training sessions within their organizations and encourage compliance with SIS standards and best practices.
- Provide joint training and awareness programs for cross-functional teams, such as Finance and Operations.
- Promote the use of SIS participant support materials, FAQs, and training resources online.
- Use SIS analytical reports below to support business operations and decisions:
    - 'Miscellaneous Correspondence Aging Report' can be downloaded from: Reports >> Miscellaneous >> Correspondence status
    - 'Dispute Status Report' can be downloaded from: Reports >> Miscellaneous >> 'Dispute Status Report'
- Regularly communicate SIS updates, new functionalities, and data quality recommendations to internal teams.
- Nominate Data Quality Champions or Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to collaborate with the SIS Data Quality Team.

6 What Can SIS Billed Members Do?

Billed members can regularly review invoice rejections and disputes to identify recurring data quality issues that may impact invoice processing, approval, or payment. By analyzing the root causes of these issues and monitoring rejection and dispute trends, they can take appropriate actions by following the relevant best-practice recommendations outlined below:

- Communicate data quality issues to billing counterparts and work with them to implement corrective actions. When support is required, collaborate with SIS Support through the IATA Customer Portal by providing complete and accurate information to facilitate analysis and resolution.
- Analyze current challenges within the airline or supplier organization, provide feedback to SIS Support through the IATA Customer Portal and recommend additional validation rules, mandatory fields, or new data elements that could improve internal invoice approval and payment processes through enhanced SIS functionality.
- Ensure that operational data (such as billing, invoicing, codes, member information, and other business data) complies with the standards and requirements defined in commercial agreements.

7 How SIS Can Help

7.1 Training, Awareness and Knowledge Sharing

- Support participants in implementing data quality controls, automation, and validation processes to improve invoice quality and operational efficiency.
- Facilitate one-on-one consultations and perform Root Cause Analysis (RCA) with participants experiencing high rejection or dispute rates.
- Monitor and analyze rejection and dispute rates to identify recurring data quality issues and members requiring corrective action.
- Engage system providers to add some data quality validations.
- Provide guidance on SIS standards, validation requirements, recommended data fields, and data quality best practices.
- Conduct regular Data Quality workshops and webinars to share best practices, discuss common challenges, and promote successful participant initiatives.
- Publish SIS support materials, including Functionality Guidance Documents, and SIS Miscellaneous Invoice Data Quality, common issues, recommendations, and industry lessons learned Webinars.
- Create awareness campaigns and communications focused on improving MISC invoice data quality, reducing processing exceptions, and addressing common rejection and dispute causes.

7.2 Enhance SIS Functionalities and Standards

- Act as a liaison between participants and SIS development teams to ensure business requirements are reflected in future enhancements.
- Gather participant feedback and identify the automation and integration opportunities that improve invoice quality and data reliability.
- Evaluate participant recommendations regarding validation rules, mandatory fields, and new data elements.
- Evaluate participant recommendations regarding SIS functionality to increase processing controls at the time of invoice transmission like PO pattern set up.
- Propose and prioritize SIS enhancements that improve invoice quality.
- Coordinate industry validation testing and pilot deployments of new functionalities before broader implementation.
- Publish relevant SIS participant support documentation on the SIS website.

8 Billing Member Check List

1. Invoice Content Verification			
1.1. Correct Charge Category and Charge Code (Refer to MISC IS-XML Standards)		Yes	Review Required
a)	Charge Category is accurate and corresponds to the invoice.	☐	☐
b)	Charge Code is correct and corresponds to the provided service/product.	☐	☐
c)	Charge Code Type is correctly selected.	☐	☐
d)	All billing data aligns with applicable SIS business rules and industry standards.	☐	☐
1.2. Adequate and Meaningful Invoice Detail		Yes	Review Required
a)	Charge Codes are not used as the only description.	☐	☐
b)	Invoice contains sufficient line-Items to clearly explain the charges.	☐	☐
c)	Each Line-Item has a meaningful and complete description and clearly identifies the service, product, or charge.	☐	☐
d)	Clearly identify the service, product, charge, or period/date of service	☐	☐
e)	Each Line-Item Detail includes more adequate information explaining the charge.	☐	☐
f)	All abbreviations and acronyms used in the invoice are either commonly understood or clearly defined by spelling out the full term within the invoice or supporting documents.	☐	☐
2. Data Accuracy and Completeness			
2.1. Operational Data Validation (Refer to MISC IS-XML Standards)		Yes	Review Required
a)	All required recommendations, and optional fields are used to ensure complete operational data is captured.	☐	☐
b)	No substitution or dummy values such as “0”, "XXX", "12345", "Test", or similar are used.	☐	☐
2.2. Member Reference Data		Compliant	Review Required
a)	Addresses, company and tax registration numbers are valid and accurate.	☐	☐
b)	Customer and supplier information is complete and up to date.	☐	☐
3. Supporting Document Optimization			
		Yes	Review Required
a)	Supporting documents are provided only when required.	☐	☐
b)	Supporting documents include page references or annotations identifying relevant data.	☐	☐
c)	Attachments include references to corresponding invoice line-Items where applicable.	☐	☐
d)	Only necessary supporting documents are included, and excessively large documents are avoided unless required.	☐	☐
e)	All attached supporting documents are clear and legible.	☐	☐